Concerning the Hawaiian Linnet.— In 'The Auk' for July, 1912, pages 336–338, Mr. John C. Phillips makes a contribution to the discussion of the interesting case of the Linnet of the Hawaiian Islands, where an apparent change in color has come about since the introduction of the bird forty of more years ago. The above writer's remarks were evidently stimulated by two things: He did not approve of the name *mutans*, this having been proposed by me in order to give the supposedly new form systematic standing; and his doubts were clearly strong as to the Hawaiian Linnet possessing any really distinctive character.

In the first place, I was chagrined that anyone after reading my former paper should interpret my use of the name *mutans* as signifying my belief that the Hawaiian Linnet owed its character to the definite process of late commonly called mutation. I see now that such an inference ought to have been anticipated, and I have a due feeling of humiliation. The word *mutans* was selected because it was the Latin equivalent of the present participle " changing," referring of course to the apparent existence in this case of a species *in process of change*,— not by any means through de Vriesian mutation, but by some other process, possibly one among those discussed in my previous paper.

In the second place, as to the value of the color-character which the Hawaiian Linnet displays, rather irregularly it is admitted, various considerations are mentioned by Mr. Phillips. One thing, however, certainly supports the notion that degree of redness (counting lemon yellow, cadmium yellow, orange, orange vermilion, poppy red, crimson, and various dilutions of these) may be a real racial or specific character, therefore of an intrinsic or germinal nature. This is, that over and over again in the best systematic writings on birds we find fine differences within this series of pigment colors recognized as perfectly good characters. The following genera among our North American Fringillidæ afford examples: Acanthis, Pinicola, Carpodacus (otherwise than in the disputed case), and Loxia. If such a character, whether or not in company with differences in size, etc., is of systematic value in any of these cases, why not in that of the Hawaiian Linnet?

The paramount interest in the problem under discussion, rests on the apparent fact that we have here a character *originating*, possibly becoming intrinsic; in other words, a species in process of change. Further collections of linnets from the Hawaiian Islands are immensely to be desired; and as Mr. Phillips suggests, someone must work with live birds under various conditions, so as to bring light from experimental sources.— J. Grinnell, *Museum of Vertebrate Zoölogy, Berkeley, California.*

The Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Other Birds at Plymouth, Mass.— The winter had been quite severe and on February 2, 1912, the harbor was nearly frozen over, only the channels, some distance off shore, being open. The shore was covered with snow and broken ice. Gulls and ducks were numerous around the open water in mid-harbor.

Where a small stream entered the harbor, I noticed quite a modification of the otherwise prevalent, boreal conditions. Waste water from some mills enters this stream, evidently raising the temperature considerably, for a mist hung over the stream and the beach was bare of ice and snow for some thirty feet on either side of the brook where it entered the harbor. The birds seemed to have taken advantage of this very local, climatic condition.

About a hundred Herring Gulls were feeding about the mouth of the stream; fifty Horned Larks were busy gleaning edible bits and two had a spirited contest for a choice morsel, while at times they twittered to each other in low, musical tones; and a bright and active Acadian Sharp-tailed Sparrow was noticed among the Larks. I observed it for some time, and it came within eight feet of me, searching for food among the sea-weed and stones, and rested for a minute or more upon a large beach stone. The creamy-buff appearance, of the back and head markings, breast and under-parts, longitudinal gray side streaks, the contour of the bill, and the sharp-tipped tail feathers were distinctly visible. I was pleased to note this species on our coast in severe mid-winter.

I am reasonably sure that this sparrow was not *maritimus* which species has some late, northern records, as its larger size and different bill would serve to identify it.

I continued my observations at this point about an hour and while here a male Golden-eye whistled overhead, so near that his attractive dress and white spot near eye were distinctly seen. Also a fine adult, male Great Black-backed Gull was noticed with some Herring Gulls near a channel.— CHARLES L. PHILLIPS, *Taunton, Mass.*

Notes on the Dickcissel in Colorado.— During the week of August fourth to eleventh, 1912, while visiting friends at the ranch of J. W. Ramsey, near Crook, Colorado, in company with Mr. Dean Babcock, of Estes Park, I was fortunate in finding a number of Dickcissels (*Spiza americana*). They were first seen and heard singing August 6. Mr. Babcock had been familiar with the bird in the east and he told me he felt positive of the song. As they were very wary some difficulty was experienced in getting within gunshot, but the first specimen was finally secured, confirming the primary identification. Five specimens in all were taken, four males and one female, a pair of which are now mounted in the Colorado Museum of Natural History. We saw at least twelve individuals on the sixth and on subsequent days in other fields, enough to make a conservative total of twenty for the vicinity.

They seemed to prefer the moist meadows of sweet clover and sunflower, rarely going to the adjoining grain fields. Their habit (so common with many birds) of remaining on the highest stalk in a clump while singing, rendered them very conspicuous but difficult to approach. The note which had proved so instrumental in the identification consisted of six syllables divided into two parts; the first part of two syllables, slightly slower and higher pitched than the last of four syllables.